LABOUR MONTHLY

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Editor: R. Palme Dutt

From Cold War to What? ★ R. P. D.

France Moves ★ Jacques Duclos

Prospects in Berlin ★ Gordon Schaffer

Wage Movement Lessons ★ J. R. Campbell

Kashmir ★ Edward Burton

I. G. Farben Ueber Alles? ★ D. N. Pritt, Q.C.

February, 1954

One shilling and sixpence

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TURNING THE WHEELS

Steel will never laugh aloud, hearing what we heard,
Stone will never break its heart, mad with hope deferred —
'Men of tact that arbitrate, slow reform that heals'—
Save the stinking grease, master, save it for the wheels!

SO WROTE G. K. Chesterton in blazing anger during the railway strike in the summer of 1911, bidding the body of employers, whom he called King Dives, to try calling upon the wheels to run, for '*all the wheels are loyal; see how still they stand!*' Today King Dives could no more set his wheels to run without 'his' men, whether on the rails, in the mines, in mechanical or electrical engineering, than he could forty years ago. Then there was a many-fronted industrial battle raging, recognised as such by King Dives' propaganda hacks, who brought into play all their poison pen weapons. Today their terms of vilification, significantly, are borrowed from their wars against the colonial peoples' liberation. We hear of Communist - dominated dockers, guerilla electricians; soon no doubt we shall be told of terrorist railwaymen, bandit engineers, brigand builders, Mau Mau miners. But as ever the 'stinking grease' is poured out on 'loyal' blacklegs and 'men of tact'. How well the wheels could run, under the care of railwaymen, engineers, electricians, miners, builders and all — without King Dives and his creatures.

How well, in fact, our readers could run the world; for they make up a fair cross-section of all the men and women who count and look confidently to the future. Here's a letter from a railwayman, sending a regular donation in the name of his three children, for 'we would like to think of them growing up with a share in L.M.' Plenty from engineers and electricians: the Scottish sea-going engineer, who 'wouldn't like to be without it. To my mind, R.P.D. is the greatest writer in analysing political trends of events'; the North Countryman who is 'confident that the part L.M. has played during the last few years in giving leadership to the working class and exposing the Tories and the right - wing labour leaders in their true colours will bear much fruit in 1954'; another speaks of its 'political lucidity, shining out as a Socialist beacon while others have stumbled in the capitalist gloom'; and a Londoner points out that 'events now unfolding show L.M.'s monthly analysis of the past years as in the nature of prophecies.'

'It's our job'

JUST HOW important is this job of putting L.M. into new hands is underlined by a Labour Party subscriber of many years standing. He writes: 'With my renewal here is a contribu-

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Notes of the Month

From Cold War to What?

'It is our inflexible purpose to destroy German militarism and Nazism and to ensure that Germany will never again be able to disturb the peace of the world. We are determined to disarm and disband all German armed forces.'

CRIMEA DECLARATION ON EUROPE OF THE U.S., BRITISH AND SOVIET GOVERNMENTS, February, 1945.

'In less than ten minutes the West German Bundestag passed the first reading of a Bill enabling universal military conscription to be re-introduced in West Germany'.

(press report, January 15, 1954.)

NOT nine years this time. Last time it took seventeen years from 'the final destruction of German militarism for ever' before Hitler introduced his Conscription Bill with the blessing of the late Lord Simon. Modern acceleration is not confined to the speed of travel; and the recent experience of the Comet suggests that the disasters can be more sudden and overwhelming. It is

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customary at all times to say that the world stands at the parting of the ways. At the moment this is more true than usual. We stand at the dividing point when the decisions now made will shape the future for many years to come. We stand at the Great Divide which closes the post-war era and will open either the new pre-war era or an era of peace. The alternatives before the projected Four Power Conference at Berlin are the symbol and expression of this choice. We can still by our actions determine the outcome.

Economic Warning Shadows

The Hitler era opened out from the world economic crisis of 1929-1932. Today the signs of a new downward trend in the economy of the diminished capitalist world are on record and universally admitted. Whether this downward trend is to be regarded as a temporary and limited phenomenon, characteristic of the ups and downs of the instability of capitalist economy in a period still preceding the onset of crisis, or as the harbinger of major slump within the next twelve or eighteen months, is still disputed by the crystal-gazers of capitalist economy. A feverish alternation between optimistic whistling in the dark and whiffs of confidence elixir to breed Dutch courage, with sudden bouts of gloomy pessimistic prognostications, is characteristic of these pundits whenever the blind forces of the system they seek to interpret bring them unmistakable signs of a spell of bad weather.

New Times New Measures

But in fact their whole discussion, the presuppositions on which it is based, and the analogies and elaborate mathematical calculations through which conclusions are attempted to be drawn, are out of focus, dated, and blind and blinkered to the realities of the modern world. In common with most of the professorial tribe their gaze is turned backward to discern the future, while the living present passes them by as unsuitable or too controversial for consideration until it has acquired a respectable antiquity. There is no comparison between the world of the late twenties or the early thirties and the world of 1954. The conditions of the world economic crisis of 1929-1932 can never recur in the same form; though even graver catastrophe could overtake the conditions of the people in the still more mortally diseased capitalist world of today, if the present policies should be allowed to continue. The import-

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ance of the present downward trend does not lie primarily in its extent, or even in the estimation of its future extent, but in the fact that it is taking place in a new world situation.

Two World Markets

When the world economic crisis spread its ravages in 1929-1932, socialist economy was represented by the U.S.S.R. alone, with one-twelfth of the world's population, which remained immune from crisis and speeding along the seven-league-boots development of the first Five Year Plan. Today there are two world markets. Among one-third of the world's population, and a dozen states, the laws of capitalist economy and crisis no longer apply. While trade begins to go downward in the old world, it speeds forward in the new. While living standards go downwards in the old world, they rise steeply in the new. While surpluses accumulate in the old world, the new begins to buy them up. This is a completely new type of situation in world economics. It can no longer be gauged by measuring rods from old crises. The new situation needs to be analysed and judged concretely in its unique character.

An 'Orthodox' Skeleton

President Eisenhower's assembled three hundred witch-doctors sought to assuage alarm over the downward trend in U.S. economy during 1953. Faced with the undeniable facts of the piling up of unsaleable farm surpluses equivalent to two-thirds of the harvest, or the swoop down of steel production from 103 per cent. of capacity at the end of 1952 to 67 per cent. of capacity in December, 1953, they sought to assuage alarm by proclaiming that all that was in prospect was an 'orthodox recession'. Sweet magic of mumbo jumbo from the lips of the witch-doctors. If words could exorcise facts, capitalist economy would never have sunk into its general crisis. But an inexorable Gresham's Law of language turns each well-intentioned euphemism into its opposite. Just as the gentle term of Bethlehem to replace the horrors of the madhouse turned into the new horror of bedlam, to be replaced in turn by the new gentle term of asylum, only for this to gather the same painful associations and be replaced by new kindlier terms current today, so with the grim skeleton in the cupboard of capitalist economy—the dread recurrence of boom and slump. In vain the witch-doctors banished the term 'slump' to replace it by 'depression'. The threat of 'depression' soon acquired the same panic associations. So

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'depression' was banished and replaced by 'recession'. And now, when 'recession' has acquired the same associations of alarm, the bland assurance is offered that it will 'only' be an 'orthodox recession' or 'readjustment', in the hope that this assurance may comfort the mounting ranks of the unemployed and those on short time, the fears of the farmers, or the anxieties of those with inadequate wages and incomes to meet rising prices.

'Planning' for the Last Slump

All the 'plans', we are assured, are ready to the last diagram and blueprint, for extended state expenditure, public works, lowered interest, investment projects, social schemes to raise purchasing power, and the like, to meet and counter any menace of a slump. Has not the new 'Lady Bountiful' orthodoxy of Keynesism replaced the old grim 'cuts' and 'let 'em starve' orthodoxy of the thirties? Like the military experts preparing zealously for the last war, the economic experts are preparing zealously for the last slump. Unfortunately, because they fail to consider what is new in the situation, any more than the real workings of capitalism, their supposed 'solutions' and quack medicines are as irrelevant as they are visionary. They cling to the exploded fallacies of Keynesian deception, at the very moment when these fallacies are being most heavily exposed in practice. The downward trend has begun at a moment when state expenditure has already been gigantically inflated and expanded; when deficit budgets have been the rule in the United States for years; when unproductive expenditure (on wars and rearmament, corresponding to Keynes' 'pyramids') has become an increasingly large part of the whole economic structure and distorted the entire economy; and when the clamour from the capitalists themselves is overwhelming for the reduction of the crushing burdens of taxation and for all-round cuts and economy.

Turning a Blind Eye

In the same way the cry in Britain from the ruling capitalist forces, not only from the Tories, but voiced equally by the dominant right-wing Labour leadership, is not for increase of purchasing power, but for 'sacrifices' in the living standards of the mass of the people in order to meet the desperate economic situation. This is the essential line of the revised Labour programme, *Challenge to Britain* (as of the old), despite the contradictory introduction of amendments promising increases in benefits and the implementation

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of equal pay, compelled by conference decisions, and now hastily stitched into the patchwork quilt without changing the central theme of maintaining the cold war and imposing consequent sacrifices and postponement of improvement of living standards. The glaring immediate causes of the desperate economic situation—lying in the colossal rearmament expenditure, cold war, colonial wars and trade bans—are sedulously avoided by the sacred three hundred witch-doctors or their colleagues in the satellite countries, for to mention these or propose practical policies to meet them would bring these favoured experts into dangerous political realm and might speedily rob them of their favoured positions and subject them to the attentions of Senator McCarthy.

A Crisis of Policy

In real life, however, these questions cannot be so easily evaded. The worsening economic situation is not only sharpening all the contradictions within the capitalist world, as the fight for the diminished capitalist world market grows more intense. At the same time it inevitably gives rise to political consequences which affect the entire existing alignment of the powers, and open up anew all the questions of the existing international political and diplomatic situation. New moves are made, no longer merely from the left, but from influential business and official quarters (F.B.I. memorandum; industrialists' delegation to Moscow with Board of Trade blessing), to develop East-West trade. Open increased pressure is exercised (Sir Gladwyn Jebb's speech at Baltimore; Bidault's threat of negotiations with Vietnam) to review policy in the Far East and in South-East Asia, to recognise China and the rightful position of China in the United Nations, and to develop trade with China. In Europe the tensions develop between the United States and its Western European associates, as the pressure is felt of the trade competition of the American-fostered industry of Western Germany and Japan, as well as of the United States' export drive. Resistance increases, especially in France, to the plans for rearming German militarism under the Adenauer regime, and is met with angry bullying impatience by the American official spokesmen. There is questioning on all sides of the intolerable economic burdens imposed by the extent of the rearmament drive, especially as the original bogey of an impending Soviet assault—the myth under cover of which the Atlantic Coalition and rearmament was initially imposed—has long been abandoned even by its authors.

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Ferment in the United States

This situation also has its effects within the United States. The first hint of economic frost nips the luxuriant summertime illusions of limitless resources and power, and elicits a deep growl against the excessive burdens of endless rearmament and military 'aid' scattered over the world to build a ramshackle coalition of reluctant and discontented satellites. The demand of the Republican supporters of the Administration for the fulfilment of election pledges to cut taxation, reduce military appropriations and subsidies, and diminish the number of American troops overseas, combines with anger and resentment against the 'ingratitude' of paid satellites who dare to dissent from American policy or even complain of its dictation. The call to reconsider strategy in relation to China especially in view of the obvious bankruptcy of the Chiang clique maintained only by American subsidies and naval guns on Formosa, and to prepare for the future inevitable recognition of China and to develop trade with China is voiced in quarters as far to the right as ex-president Hoover, by Stassen in charge of the Foreign Operations Administration, and by influential advisers of President Eisenhower.

Atomic Energy

Even more significant are the new approaches on atomic energy. The tardy recognition of Soviet scientific superiority in the atomic field, and especially in the development of the peaceful use of atomic energy, with the consequent new perspectives opening, was admitted by the Chairman of the Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, Mr. Sterling Cole, already in a speech in June, 1953:

> The possibility that Russia might actually demonstrate her allegedly peaceful intentions in the field of atomic energy, while we are still concentrating on atomic weapons, would be a major blow to our position in the world (quoted in the *New York Times,* November 4, 1953).

As a result, at the same time as the United States is busy rebuffing British approaches for an exchange of atomic information:

> Mr. Sterling Cole said yesterday that it was most unlikely that either his committee or Congress would agree at the current session to exchange atomic information with Britain and Canada.
>
> (*Manchester Guardian,* January 6, 1954.)

the first tentative approaches are made to bilateral U.S.-Soviet private negotiations on atomic energy; and President Eisenhower went out of his way to emphasise the 'friendly' character of the talks between Zarubin and Dulles. A London *Times* editorial was quick to express alarm at this first indication of a return to direct U.S.-Soviet negotiations to the exclusion of Britain.

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Beyond the Cold War?

Thus the first—still very limited—signs of questioning the entire foundations of the cold war programme, which has so far been proclaimed as the pivot and axis of United States' policy and of the policy of the American coalition ever since its first public promulgation in 1947, have begun to make themselves felt, not only outside the United States, but also within the United States. There is no change of policy yet. The indications of exploring alternatives still point as much to the possibility of new and extended aggression as to relaxation. But a stage has been reached when the *New York Times* can write of the outlook for 1954:

> The outlook for 1954 is: less tension abroad, and more economic tension at home. . . . The Eisenhower Administration is levelling off for what is now called here 'cold peace'.
>
> (*New York Times*, January 1, 1954.)

It is this indeterminate situation which is reflected in the agreement for the Foreign Ministers of the four powers to meet in Berlin—for the first time since the American rupture of the Council of Foreign Ministers in 1947. There is no sign yet of readiness for genuine negotiation. But even the decision to hold the Four Power Conference is an initial victory of the peace movement, just as the Korean cease-fire was a victory, despite the grave and menacing situation which still exists in Korea.

Sydney Signposts

One aspect of this situation was revealed at the Sydney Conference of Commonwealth Finance Ministers. If the main basic difference between the present world economic situation and that which moved into the world economic crisis of a quarter of a century ago lies in the existence of two world markets, the second difference is in the change of relations and extreme inequality of development within the remaining capitalist world. United States' economic preponderance already made itself felt in the world of the twenties, so that all the cocksure proclamations then current of the 'American economic miracle', and of the magic healing balm of dollar credits for 'stabilisation', ended in the American slump dragging the whole capitalist world into a shipwreck. But the inequality of development had not yet reached the phase of such overwhelming preponderance and domination as to turn the other capitalist countries into more or less reluctant satellites and subsidised dependents. In consequence the fear is now universally expressed that even a limited American 'recession' would mean economic disaster for the rest of the capi-

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talist world. This fear received prominent expression at Sydney. The deteriorating economic situation sharpens all the conflicts between the British Empire and the United States.

Sterling and the Dollar

Sydney was devoted to 'consolidating' the sterling area against dollar pressure. The Empire, it was proudly proclaimed, represented 'the world's largest single trading unit, accounting for 30 per cent. of the world's trade'. This is of course to include Canada, which is not in the sterling area. All this boasting could not conceal the fact that in 1953 (second quarter figures), the dollar area was responsible for 33 per cent. of world exports, and the sterling area 22 per cent.; and that the proportion of world exports from the United States had risen from 13.7 per cent. in 1937 to 22 per cent. in 1953, while that of Britain had fallen from 10.7 per cent. in 1937 to 9 per cent. in 1953. The readiness and ability of London to supply the export of capital for Empire development was emphatically proclaimed—with the corollary emphasised by a Treasury official at Sydney that

> Increased overseas investments by Britain would mean real sacrifices by the British people. There would be fewer houses, less rejuvenation of British factories, perhaps fewer imports of some goods by Britain.
>
> (*Daily Telegraph*, January 14, 1954.)

Exactly the line of *Challenge to Britain*.

Commonwealth Contradictions

But all this proclamation had to be followed by the most stringent limiting conditions on the availability of British capital ('access has to be limited'), in view of the crushing burden of Britain's arms commitments which were stated by Mr. Butler to account for £350 to £400 million on the negative side in Britain's balance of payments:

> Were it not for the defence effort, the balance of payments position could be improved by between £350 and £400 million sterling annually.
>
> (Rt. Hon. R. A. Butler, Chancellor of the Exchequer, at Sydney, January 6, 1954.)

A revealing statement worthy to be recalled next time the balance of payments question is raised as a supposed inevitable physical problem of paying for food and raw materials. Nor could this proclamation conceal the fact that the new Australian oil development was financed by American, not British capital; that all Butler's

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overtures to share in Australian uranium resources met with no visible response; and that Australian complaints over Britain's dollar wheat purchases were vociferous. The Sydney Conference not only revealed the sharpening conflicts between the British Empire and the United States. It also revealed the sharpening conflicts between the imperialist countries linked in the Empire, and the weakening position of Britain. It demonstrated that a common policy of the peoples in the Empire can only be found on the basis of a policy for peace, for ending the cold war and colonial wars, and for recognising the national independence and equal rights of all the peoples in the Empire.

Berlin Conference

At the centre of the entire international situation stands the Berlin Four Power Conference of Foreign Ministers. Whatever the problems, difficulties and struggles in front, the holding of this conference is a victory in the fight for peace. It is no final or decisive victory; but it opens the doors to the next stage and the next objective, towards which all efforts need now to be directed, that the Ministers shall not only meet, but shall genuinely negotiate. Seven months ago the proposal for a meeting at governmental level between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union met with an initial flat rejection from the United States. This rejection proved impossible to sustain. In the next phase the attempt was made by Eisenhower and Dulles to lay down a long series of pre-conditions which must be carried out by the Soviet Union (equivalent to the ultimatum demands of a maximum 'unconditional surrender' war) before there could be any question of negotiations with the Soviet Union. All these demands had to be in the end put on one side. In the last phase of rearguard obstructive action the attempt was made to confine the meeting to a meeting of the Foreign Ministers only on the two demands of the Atlantic coalition with regard to so-called 'free' German elections (*i.e.*, elections under military occupation and foreign control in a divided Germany—the opposite of free elections) and the Austrian Treaty. This last attempt at obstruction had in the end also to be abandoned in face of the universal popular demand in all countries for real negotiations. By the last Soviet note, accepted by the Western Powers, the agenda is free to cover the whole question of Germany, as well as the wider questions of a European settlement, a Five Power Conference, the reduction of international tension, the banning of atomic and hydrogen weapons,

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and the limitation of armaments. Every attempt may still be made to burke serious discussion of these issues. But the doors are opened; and the same popular pressure which compelled the conference to meet can be exercised further to compel the conference to do its duty and tackle seriously the problems of peace.

From Bermuda to Berlin

By the Bermuda Declaration drawn up in December the United States sought to bind the hands of the Western European Powers, Britain and France, to a fixed and unalterable aggressive policy laid down beforehand, for the rearming of German militarism and its incorporation in the American-dominated military coalition, in such a way as to render negotiation at Berlin impossible. But much has happened since Bermuda. All the attempts to force, bludgeon and bully the French parliament into ratifying E.D.C. (the thin cover for Nazi rearmament) before the conference have failed. Bidault goes to Berlin with no mandate for E.D.C. The long battle over the presidential election has been followed by the victory of the opponents of E.D.C. in the election of the new President of the Chamber, Le Troquer—a victory made possible by the combination of the Communist and Socialist Parties with patriotic representatives from the centre and right. The crisis of the war in Vietnam, with the military victories of the Laos liberation armies, following the unwise refusal of Ho Chi Minh's offer of an armistice, has intensified the demand for an end of this costly and indefensible war which weakens France's position in Europe. The profound significance of the situation now developing in France—of key importance for the future in Europe—is explained in the article which we are privileged to print in this issue, and which has been specially written for *Labour Monthly* by the veteran leader of the French working class and of the French national fight for independence, Jacques Duclos. In Italy the defeat of De Gasperi has been followed by the resignation of Pella. In Western Germany Lord Hinchingbrooke's letter to *The Times* has testified to the wide volume of feeling rejecting the bellicose policy of the Adenauer clique (whose aim, according to the German Social Democratic Party, is to 'sabotage' the Berlin Conference), indignantly repudiating the Western militarists' subterfuge of spurious 'free elections' under military occupation and foreign control, and earnestly hoping for the achievement of a reunited democratic and peaceful Germany through the Berlin Conference.

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The Agony of Mr. Dulles

In face of the French resistance to committing suicide by ratifying E.D.C., the infuriated Mr. Dulles let loose the threat in Paris that such a refusal would not only end the flow of dollars to France, but could lead to an 'agonising re-appraisal' of the entire policy of the United States in Europe as pursued since 1947. Further indications given in his following speech in Washington last December were that such 'agonising re-appraisal' might mean the withdrawal of American troops from Europe, leaving Europe to manage its own affairs. This terrible threat did not have the intended effect. No doubt all good Europeans struggled to maintain a straight face before this threat, lest Mr. Dulles should fail to fulfil it. But the American press was quick to point out that the threat could be no more than a 'stuffed club', since the last thing American policy wanted would be to abandon its stranglehold on Europe:

> These are formidable pronouncements. The patent implication is that without early ratification of E.D.C. the whole course of American foreign policy in Europe, as it has developed at least since the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, must be revised. But how? . . .
>
> After stressing at considerable length the great importance of N.A.T.O. to the United States, and the size of the investment we have put into it, the Secretary ends with his intimation that perhaps U.S. divisions may have to be withdrawn from Germany. That any such move must at once wreck N.A.T.O., throw away the $11 billion investment already made in it and in effect concede the cold war victory to the Russians must be just as plain to any French politician as to any American newspaper reader. . . . N.A.T.O. could hardly survive a week.
>
> To talk as if such things were practical politics or strategy can deceive no one.
>
> ('The Agonising Re-appraisal', *New York Herald-Tribune*, December 28, 1953.)

So the agony continues.

Beginnings of 'Re-appraisal'

Nevertheless, there are signs that 're-appraisal' is beginning. The speech of Mr. Dulles to the Council of Foreign Relations in New York on January 12 gave some indication of this. After an emphatic criticism of the entire preceding American foreign policy since 1947, including the Truman Doctrine, aid to Greece and Turkey, the Marshall Plan, the Berlin airlift and Korea, as 'over-extending' American forces, he declared that 'transformations' of policy were needed:

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> It was unsound strategy to commit so many troops in Asia that there were no strategic reserves left. It was unsound policy to support other countries permanently. It was not sound to become permanently committed to military expenditures so vast that they led to 'practical bankruptcy'. (*The Times* summary report, January 13, 1954.)

Hard facts, as Marx once said of the 'mushroom-upstarts of the new holy Prusso-German empire', are beginning to 'drum dialectics even into the heads of' the new Yankee 'mushroom-upstarts' and would-be lords of the world.

Which Way?

But which way will the 'transformation' move? Towards the first glimmerings of common sense and readiness to negotiate? Or towards more reckless desperate aggression, as the bankruptcy of the previous 'cold war' policies becomes apparent? Like a signpost with two arms, the signs of Mr. Dulles' speech and other indications point both ways. On the one hand, he called for 'massive retaliatory power' to strike in any direction at a moment's notice 'with all weapons':

> We need to be ready to fight in the Arctic and in the tropics, in Asia, the Near East and in Europe; by sea, by land and by air, and with new weapons.

A sufficiently bellicose declaration. Imagine the outcry if such a declaration were made by a Soviet Foreign Minister. On the other hand, the whole logic of his argument pointed to the danger of American forces becoming 'over-extended' all over the world; he even quoted Lenin in his support. Was the bellicose outpouring intended to assuage the suspicions of Congress fire-eaters, while preparing in fact some limitation of commitments or modification of policy? Or was the thesis of limiting commitments intended to prepare the way for a yet more reckless and desperate strategy to turn any local incident into a major atomic war? On the face of it, the latter was the thesis of his speech; and the world needs to be alert to the danger.

Straws in the Wind

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the signs of the influential moves in some American quarters towards a revision of policy to China; the Dulles-Zarubin conversations and Eisenhower's cordial reference to them; Eisenhower's testimony to the Korean People's Republic reduction of armed forces and tribute to their work of economic reconstruction. These are straws in the wind, alongside

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many violent and menacing signs, equally in relation to Korea and the Far East, and in relation to Europe. There is no indication yet of any readiness to treat Berlin other than as a concession to the pressure of British and French opinion, in order to convince the Western European associates of the impossibility of reaching any agreement with the Soviet Union, and so to use the assumed breakdown for the purpose of hurrying through the real aim of rearming the West German militarists. Thus there is no ground for illusions on the character of the fight in front to win real negotiations and prevent the menace of a rearmed German militarism once again threatening Europe.

Action for Peace

But the ball is at our feet. The Four Power Conference is due to meet. All the issues of international policy are inevitably coming up for review in the present situation. The worsening economic trends in the capitalist world, while they can increase the danger of sudden desperate action by the most reckless elements of the war camp, also increase the pressure for retrenchment of inflated arms expenditure, for East-West trade and the relaxation of tension. The currents in Europe for a revision of policy away from the disastrous cold war programme are strong. The outcome will depend, not on predictions, but on the strength of the actions of the peoples of all countries for peace—and especially in Britain. The Four Power Conference, however great the difficulties and obstructions in the path, can and must be made the starting point for real negotiations and new relations between the powers; for a serious approach to the problem of Germany and a peaceful settlement in Europe; and to lead the way to a Five Power Conference for the reduction of international tension and the limitation of armaments. These are the great goals which open out before us with the convening of the Berlin Conference; and their achievement is bound up with all our aims and needs for tackling our urgent problems at home.

January 18, 1954. R.P.D.

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The Next Step

Last month we printed on our middle pages a special appeal to readers to raise circulation. Here are some replies, just from the South of England, from readers already busy on it.

London engineer: The Joe Scott article is good. The chaps in the workshop liked it because it raises fundamental aspects.

Surrey professional worker: Will certainly try to increase the circulation of *L.M.* It is such a first rate magazine and needs to be read by more and more people.

East coast subscriber: I've sent it on to a local school teacher, secretary of the P.P.U. His mother is doing good work in the Co-op.

South coast building trade worker: All my copies are given to active people in the local Labour Party and the Co-op, and are doing very good work. I like the new format of the good old *L.M.* and the articles are top rate. Palme Dutt's Notes give us big hopes for 1954. More strength to you.

West Country subscriber: I don't think readers even of 10 years' standing do really know the part the magazine has played in building up informed opinion. If it could be told in illustrations, I think it would do more than anything else to help spread readership.

Home Counties teacher: . . . so when school started again and the head said: 'You haven't been about to explain the international situation to me lately', I suggested that she had better take *L.M.* She said she would be grateful if I would bring her a copy each month.

Clearly, the circulation *can* be raised month by month. But this depends on *each reader* taking the appeal as addressed to himself or herself. Take for instance the engineering article in the January issue and consider what things are in it that would go right home to your workmates because it 'raises fundamental aspects,' to quote the London engineer: and applicable to other industries too.

Will each reader consider who are the two or three most likely among his friends and workmates so that each month the question is put squarely before them with all the good reasons for it?

To show how Labour unity can be built, and indeed has been built, with an enormous increase of strength to the working class, we printed last month the article especially written for *Labour Monthly* by the General Secretary of the Socialist Party of Italy: this month we print the article (also especially written for us) by Jacques Duclos, Secretary of the Communist Party of France.

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FRANCE MOVES

'Les forces profondes de la Nation se lèvent en France'

JACQUES DUCLOS
(Secretary of the French Communist Party)

CLOSING the session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on June 17, 1953, Maurice Thorez declared: 'And now in France there begin to arise the deep forces of the nation which will determine the new course of events which will lead to the triumph in our country of a policy of peace and national independence, a policy of freedom and social progress'. It was not long before the facts had brilliantly borne out this foresight: namely in the mighty movements for the demands of wage-earners and peasants and in a remarkable awakening of national consciousness, embracing the various social strata of the country, against the ratification of the Bonn and Paris Agreements which were designed to subordinate the independence of France to the interests of revanchist Germany.

Beginning on August 7 and lasting for most of them for close on three weeks, three million workers were engaged in strikes which practically paralysed the life of the nation. Foremost among them were the railwaymen and the postal workers. Only a very few trains were running and no postal services at all; with these, and also up against the state as employer were lined up miners, gas workers, electricians and many civil servants. (*Labour Monthly* has given an excellent analysis of this struggle.*) Yet the month of August is usually a 'quiet time', and the magnitude and militancy of the strikes took the Government by surprise. It was the publication of the ministerial Decree Laws, affecting as they did the situation of workers in public employ, that suddenly unleashed the accumulated anger provoked especially by the reduction in purchasing power of wages and salaries. The strikes were betrayed by the leaders of the socialist unions (Force Ouvriere) and the Christian Unions (C.F.T.C.); but the course of the strikes was marked by *a decisive progress in the idea of unity in action,* yet with some shortcomings in achieving this unity in that some groupings of unions did damage to their solid and basically democratic constitution.

On November 9, practically the whole body of teachers from high schools to the smallest village school, went on a 24-hour strike,

*October, 1953.

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not only against their down-grading in the salary scale but also against the Budget cuts in education and for academic freedom.

The struggles of the peasants, from July until now, have been the most important that France has known since the Revolution of 1789. They took various forms: gatherings, boycott of markets and above all putting up thousands of barricades on the highway, notably in the wine and meat producing areas of the West Central region. Cultivators protested against the slump in their produce and the lowering of their selling price—due to the reduction of the purchasing power of the mass of the people—and more or less consciously against the deliberate policy which sacrifices the small family cultivators to benefit the industrial monopolists and the bigger middle-men.

In privately-owned industry, if up to now there have been no big all-in movements, yet many struggles are going on, in different undertakings or at workshop level, for wage increases, against speed-up, against the closing of factories and increasing dismissals. The problem of unemployment is becoming in fact of daily concern to the workers, particularly in mining and in constructional engineering because of the disastrous effects of the Schuman coal and steel plan. Thus in the private sector of industry the situation is similar to that of the public sector just before the great movements of August: all seemed calm then but it needed only the spark of the Decree Laws to provoke the explosion.

It is important to notice that a general feeling of solidarity linked these different struggles. It was not possible to range the peasantry against the public employees; on the contrary, the peasantry showed great sympathy; some regional federations of the General Confederation of Agriculture in addition to their claims put forward the question of revaluation of the purchasing power of the workers*; the parents stood by the teachers on strike; workers warmly supported the revolt of the countryfolk, for at the consuming end they gain no benefit at all from the lowering of the price of agricultural products. This is due primarily to the way the heavy indirect taxes hit foodstuffs: 9 fr. per kilogramme of bread; 15 fr. per litre of wine; 200 fr. per kilo of butter, etc. These different social groupings are united by one common desire: *this must be changed*. As Maurice Thorez put it: 'Workers, employees and civil servants, traders and artisans, intellectuals, ex-service men and war-disabled, women and

*Readjustment of wages in relation to Price Index.

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young people, all are taking note of the fact that their particular demands are bound up with the general demand for a complete change in French policy'.

1953 was marked by a considerable increase in the hearing given to the campaigns of the National Peace Council to put an end to the disastrous war in Indo-China, to stop the ratification of the Bonn and Paris Agreements and for the policy of negotiations for the settlement of international differences. Petitions, meetings locally and on a national scale, led to the striking rallying of public opinion in defence of the national interest and of peace, above all because the danger of the rebirth of German imperialism was almost universally realised after the electoral success on September 6 of Adenauer. We may mention among the most striking repercussions the effect on two leaders of the Radical Party, Messieurs Herriot and Daladier.

The question of an independent national policy is being forcefully raised today in the most varied quarters. It is the result of the clash of contradictions of the Atlantic Pact policy followed since 1947, of the spreading conviction that the improvement of the living conditions of the toiling masses depends upon the reorientation of foreign policy, of the successes achieved by the camp of peace, making those who believed in the inevitability of war think again. Among these last the bogey of the 'Soviet threat' has clearly lost much of its effectiveness. 'Nobody believes any longer', wrote *Le Monde* on November 18, 'that the Russians are ready to throw themselves upon Europe in the coming months'. There is to be seen then, increasingly, shifts in standpoints, and among them that of General de Gaulle favouring, if not a return to the policy of friendship embodied in the Franco-Soviet Treaty of Alliance of December 10, 1944, at least to seek agreements with the Soviet Union, which agreements alone can guarantee France's security. Very important, this, for it deals a blow at the slogan: No alternative policy to that of the so-called European Defence Community.

In a general way—and it is the great merit of the Communist Party and its national policy—we have broken through the systematic and concerted campaign aimed at persuading the French that their country is on the decline, incapable of doing anything for itself and must resign itself to accepting the goodwill of its big foreign 'protectors'. These attempts at demoralisation, in which some decadent intellectuals, mistaking the decline of French imperialism for that of the people, took part, have aroused anger—an anger admirably expressed by Joliot Curie speaking at the

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National Council of the Peace Movement: 'Those who preach renunciation and try to drag you into subordination are either second-raters who picture all Frenchmen in their own image, or traitors to their country'. On the contrary there is a great renewal of confidence in the decisive part which France must play in maintaining peace.

All these movements of opinion have had their repercussion in parliament. That was clearly seen in the great debate at the end of November which had for its theme 'organisation of Europe', behind which phrase it was hoped to push through at least the acceptance in principle of the European army. The debate which lasted for nearly two weeks and in which 60 speakers took part (of whom only 15 announced themselves in support of the E.D.C. and even so with reservations) revealed 'a heart-breaking confusion' according to the bourgeois press. That is to say, all the parties with the sole exception of the Communist Party, are deeply worried and divided, that the majority was at sixes and sevens and that the government itself proved to be rent and powerless. The standpoint of the socialists, most 'European' of all, was rejected and the Laniel cabinet only just got its vote of confidence and this on a very vaguely phrased motion. It should be recalled that in November, 1950, when Pleven, Minister of National Defence, presented his famous plan for a European Army to the Assembly, he got 350 votes, a big majority. The parties can no longer find a way of resisting the popular pressure which grows greater as more and more urgent requests and orders arrive from Washington, London and Bonn for the ratification of the Agreements.

Another sign of trouble which sowed confusion among the political groupings was the majority in the National Assembly on November 7, against cancelling the parliamentary immunity of the four Communist deputies charged with 'demoralising the army and the nation'—a nasty knock at the plot staged by the government against the Communist Party.

'The Congresses of every party', stated *Figaro,* 'register the divergence between the fighting rank and file and the leaders'. Thus, Pleven had to give up the presidency of the U.D.S.R. because its conference went on record for negotiations capable of putting an end to the war in Indo-China. The ups and downs of the election of the President of the Republic by parliament which lasted for a week and only at the thirteenth ballot (never before had there been more than two since 1871) finished up with the appointment of a

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mediocrity, also illustrates the enormous difficulties encountered by the big bourgeoisie in ruling against the people. Hence the conflicts aroused between the parties and within the parties.

Those candidates who were the most passionate 'Europeans' and the most devoted to their American masters, Bidault and Delbos, were speedily eliminated; which caused the Paris correspondent of the *New York Times* to say that a majority for the E.D.C. was more than ever uncertain. A big section of the Radicals refused to vote for Laniel the notorious Premier whose election would have deeply angered the workers and would have increased the pressure for their demands.

The differences in all parties, with the exception of the Communist Party on the subject of the E.D.C., and the anti-social attitude of certain opponents of the European Army prevented clear expression of the full force of the opposition to the E.D.C.; but the desire for change is such that the manifestations which were observed during the congress have been interpreted as a visible tendency towards the regrouping of a parliamentary 'left'. It is very evident that the attitude of the Communist deputies and senators, steadfast to the last in supporting the candidature of Naegelen, despite the anti-unity behaviour of some 'European' leaders of the Socialist Party, will help to stimulate the development of a single front from below between Communist and Socialist workers.

Class considerations still stood in the way of the concern for national interest, notably among the Gaullist opponents of E.D.C., who could not decide to vote for a candidate supported by the Communists. But the French people, with their deep-lying hopes, were present at the Congress, and they put a sprag in the wheels of the politicians' cabals, hitherto the regular thing in this sort of election. It was the first time also that the problems of foreign policy have been brought in to the Assembly at Versailles.

The foreign press, which spoke of this as a 'sign of impotence' are making a mistake. It must be made clear that the appearances of confusion were due to the fact that though the balance is not yet upset between the forces for maintaining the status quo and the forces demanding a new policy, popular indignation is on the way to make itself felt. It appears quite evident, in any case, that without the Communists, and without the working class, the true cause of France—the recovery of national independence and social progress—cannot be maintained.

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Of course, the big bourgeoisie is determined to oppose to the bitter end a complete change of policy; as they see their base crumbling away, more and more they throw off the formal democratic mask and turn to police and fascist methods of government. They tried to stage a great plot against the Communist Party and the C.G.T. The most active militant workers in the factories are being systematically sacked. Democratic journals are charged under the flimsiest pretexts and subjected to heavy fines. More schemes are in hand, in accordance with the best McCarthyist procedure, aiming at gagging liberty of opinion, establishing political discrimination, barring civil servants and public employees from the right to strike. The executive is trying hard to curtail parliamentary debates and assume the power to rule by Decree Laws.* They are pressing for a reactionary re-drafting of the Constitution of 1946. It is certain that one of the principal reasons of those who support the E.D.C. is that the European Army would be an international police force in which German contingents commanded by S.S. officers and Hitlerite generals could be called upon to 'restore order' in France.

The principal auxiliary of reaction in its stubborn stand is the action of certain leaders of the Socialist Party whose only endeavour is to prevent Communist and Socialist workers from struggling side by side against their common enemies. The Socialist Party plays at parliamentary opposition after the fashion of the Labour Party, using the maximum demagogy. But it serves the American party well by supporting completely the policy of European integration, by taking the lead in the most sordid anti-Sovietism, and above all, by insisting upon denying the obvious tie-up between war preparations and the difficult conditions of the workers and peasants. They count on the international feelings of the working class in carrying on their obstinate propaganda of the myth of 'Europe', a cover behind which the bourgeoisie seeks to achieve the rearmament of Germany.

The most sober calculations establish that despite overtime being worked in the armaments industries and a considerable rise in productivity, purchasing power is only 53 per cent. of what it was in 1938. The socialist-dominated Force Ouvriere unions can no longer openly come out against strikes; the betrayal by their leaders on August 20 having lost them much of their influence.

While the interminable balloting was going on at Versailles, air communications were paralysed by a strike of maintenance staff,

*Corresponding to Orders-in-Council.

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the offices of postal sorters at the Paris stations and many provincial centres were deserted, peasants in many Departments of Central France were throwing up barricades and defending them vigorously against the police. All this goes together. The government, whose chief was defeated in spite of his indecent obstinacy, has no authority; as was shown at Bermuda—and the ferment in the parties will make it difficult for this government to maintain itself in a durable way after Coty officially enters the Elysee.*

At the last Congress of the Communist Party the Secretary-General, Maurice Thorez, declared: 'When the relations between the classes alter there will be felt inevitable repercussions on the parliamentary and governmental level. It is in vain that little men think that they can hold back by little means the growing pressure of the popular masses. They might as well try to make water run uphill'. This great political perspective is visibly coming nearer. Provided that ever greater efforts, ever bolder efforts, are made to rally all those who want a change, big possibilities exist for the achievement of a fighting alliance between the working class and the peasantry. The successes of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the increasing resistance to colonial domination which the oppressed peoples are putting up, notably in Morocco and Tunis, underline the weakness and the difficulties of French imperialism.

It is necessary to develop a single front for all workers, with slogans common to all and corresponding to the interests of all, on the level of immediate demands: a minimum guaranteed wage; a revaluation of wages and salaries; no closing of factories; an increase in the national budget for economic, social and cultural purposes through sweeping cuts in military expenditures (which account for 45 per cent. of the whole budget). To this should be added the satisfaction of the peasants' demands, respect for democratic liberties, a struggle against the repeal of the Constitution, an end to the war in Indo-China by an immediate truce and peace negotiations with Ho Chi Minh, the rejection of the Agreements of Bonn and Paris. This last is in the foreground, to avert the deadly danger which, with the rebirth of German militarism, hangs over our country and over peace. 'Nothing is more important, nothing is more urgent', said Maurice Thorez, than the gathering together of all the national forces to hold up the Agreements. This is why our Central Committee on October 22 and 23 proposed a front of struggle, with no bounds set to it, in these terms:

*The official residence, corresponding to Buckingham Palace, of the President of the French Republic.

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We Communists declare that we are ready, with all Frenchmen, whoever they be,—we say advisedly, whoever they may be—who, like us, do not want a new Wehrmacht, to take part in all political activities which can and must be organised in a mighty campaign throughout the length and breadth of France.

This declaration proved a sensation. *Le Figaro* commented in these terms: 'Every somersault, every turn, is to be expected'. They exaggerated; but their fear comes from the fact that they see clearly that the imperative desire for an independent French policy is spreading to all social strata. It is no longer the 'blunders' of this government or that that are condemned, but a general line of submission to foreign schemes.

To restore to France her rightful place in the settlement of international affairs and above all in the settlement of the German problem—that is the stake in the political battle now rapidly developing. To the class outlook of big business which knows no patriotism there stands opposed the defence of the nation's interests of which the working class is the truest champion.

In this battle the Communist Party knows well that a grouping of the working-class forces, republicans and patriots, can force through a complete change in the orientation of French policy for which the whole country is longing and will do everything to widen it to the furthest possible limits. Oddly enough, the new President of the Republic is by profession a liquidator in bankruptcy. The finest liquidation in bankruptcy his entry into office could inaugurate would be that of the Americanisation of France.

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PROSPECTS IN BERLIN

GORDON SCHAFFER

THE last meeting of foreign ministers to consider the German problem was in London in December, 1947. The Conference broke down when Mr. Marshall, Mr. Bevin, and M. Bidault walked out rather than discuss the proposal of Mr. Molotov that Germany should pay reparations out of current production to the countries she had devastated. Mr. Marshall declared with his hand on his heart that it would be intolerable to impose such a burden on the shattered economy of Germany. Mr. Molotov said that if Germany could be helped to build up her capacity for peaceful production it would assist her own recovery and would leave her with plenty of resources to lift the standards of the German people. History has proved Mr. Molotov right. We know now, this was not the real reason. Even while the Four Power meeting was on, the plans were already being prepared to create a separate state out of the three Western Zones. We know now that the Americans had even then printed the separate Western currency which was to be issued the following June, and which was to lead to the Berlin crisis, the air lift, and the American demand for an armed alliance of Western Europe.

While the London Conference was in session, James Forrestal, United States Secretary for Defence, was writing in his diary:— 'The years before any possible power can achieve the capability effectively to attack us with weapons of mass destruction are our years of opportunity'. The Editor of the Forrestal Diary (published in 1951) adds a significant comment to this remark:—

> In Forrestal's thought the atomic bomb had already moved into the centre of the international equation. He had apparently not been impressed by Molotov's veiled if boastful warning of the month before. He was still uncertain whether the country (*i.e.*, America) would be resolute in the bomb's use. At the time we were still bound by the secret* Quebec agreement with Britain and Canada, and even months later, long after the agreement had been adjusted, he was asking every casual visitor to his office whether the public would support the employment of the bomb in the event of a major war.

Now we know the background, it is quite clear that the Americans abandoned the four power basis for post-war co-operation as a pre-

*This was the agreement concluded by Churchill under which the Americans agreed not to use the bomb except in consultation with Britain and Canada. According to General Vandenberg, Britain waived the agreement as a condition of receiving Marshall Aid.

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Salt-mining (Italy)

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Drawn by SARO MIRABELLA

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liminary to a policy of cold war, and eventually of hot war, conducted under what Sir Winston Churchill once described as the 'shield of the atom bomb'.

And now after more than six years the four foreign ministers are to meet again. That is a tremendous victory for the peace forces of the world. The four power meeting is being held because the people have demanded it. No statesman dares openly deny the people's hopes of a negotiated settlement of the issues dividing the world. Not only is their meeting taking place with the peoples alerted to the dangers (mainly through the work of the world peace movement) as they certainly were not in 1947, it is also being held with the realities of the situation more clearly appreciated by the rulers of the Western Powers. American Ministers are not writing in their diaries today about their monopoly of the atom bomb, they are actually discussing with the Russians a modest scheme for international use of atomic energy.

But it is one thing to secure a meeting between the Powers; it is another to ensure that there are sincere negotiations. Dr. Adenauer does not want sincere negotiations. He wants the Western Powers to present a series of alternatives inluding one demanding the present release of the Nuremberg criminals. Mr. Foster Dulles has so far shown little sign that he wants agreement. His policy to date is to make impossible demands, declare agreement impossible, and then to get on with the re-armament of the Nazi Generals.

What are the forces on the side of agreement and peace? The most important is the overwhelming opposition to the German re-armament plan in all the Western European countries including the Federal Republic. If France capitulates in Berlin it will be against the will of the French people. It will be as cowardly and criminal a surrender by a corrupt ruling class as the betrayal at Vichy in 1940. The urgent need is for the other peoples of Europe and particularly the British people to voice opposition and to give courage to France.

But the Berlin meeting will not start with a discussion on the Western plan to re-arm Germany. Various issues will be raised and the millionaire press will do all in its power to distort the picture. Unfortunately their task will be easier because over the years propaganda has given to the Western world a completely distorted idea of the German problem. The Americans for example appear determined to deny all rights to the German Democratic Republic. Now the fact is there cannot be sincere agreement unless the *bona fides* of both Republics are accepted. It may be an effort for Mr.

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Dulles and Mr. Eden to accept discussions with the Communist and Socialist leaders of the German Democratic Republic. It will be no bigger than the effort the Russians will have to make to accept discussions with a West German Foreign Office, 80 per cent. of whose officials (according to an official statement in the German Parliament) were appointed by the Nazi government.

The facts are that the German Democratic Republic enjoys the overwhelming support of the working people, and is increasingly winning the co-operation of the professional classes and of the peasants. The people of Eastern Germany will certainly not agree to exchange their present economic and social structure for that of the Federal Republic. Sincere discussions on German unity can find a way—possibly through a measure of economic autonomy to the *Laender*, but there must be an acceptance by all four powers of the rights of both German Republics before a solution can be discussed.

Incidentally those who swallowed the propaganda about the events in Eastern Germany last June should read the ultra-right-wing London newspaper the *Recorder* for December 21. On that date it printed an unsigned despatch from Berlin quoting what it called 'active resistance fighters', which completely confirms the picture of events of the German Democratic Government. The despatch says that the workers' demonstrations on June 16 were spontaneous but that on June 17 'after West Berlin radio had proclaimed that a full-scale revolt would get the active backing of the Western allies, the Western sympathisers throughout East Germany threw off their masks as Communist Party members, party officials and even government officials in the firm belief that all-out allied backing would come'. The *Recorder* goes on to say that when these 'Western sympathisers' realised allied backing could not and would not come 'it was too late'. In other words the carefully laid plan to stage a 'revolt' in Eastern Germany as a preliminary to intervention in the G.D.R. went off at half cock. And as the Government of the G.D.R. asserted at the time the saboteurs were without support among the people.

Another question which must come up in the early discussions is the Potsdam agreement to which Britain and America as well as Russia are pledged (France gave general adherence later). The Russians have the legal right to demand the implementation of that agreement. But Potsdam was an anti-fascist peace and expressed the determination of the war-time allies to destroy Nazism and

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militarism throughout Germany. If the Potsdam decisions, which provided allied (not Russian) machinery for the elimination of active Nazis from the government, the police, the law, education and other sections of the national life were operated in Western Germany today, there would be no Federal Republic. If the agreement to regard as active Nazis all who gave financial and economic support to the Hitler regime were applied today, West German industry would have to be completely re-organised. It is impossible to go back to 1945 despite the fact that solemn agreements have been broken, but there can be no solution if the Western Powers in addition to repudiating Potsdam also demand the right to restore Nazism in all Germany and to convert it into an armed camp for the West.

Finally, there can be no agreement unless the Western Powers stand by the agreement made at Yalta and confirmed at Potsdam to accept the Oder-Neisse line and the new Czechoslovak border as the frontiers of Germany. It may be that when Churchill and Roosevelt agreed to the restoration to Poland of territories which had been Slav in the distant past, and which were necessary to provide a viable economy, they hoped that General Anders would rule the New Poland. But that frontier was established by Allied agreement and at Potsdam the allies agreed further on the removal of the German-speaking population to Germany proper. There can be no going back on that decision. The German Democratic Republic has accepted the frontiers, and there is friendship and peace on the Oder-Neisse frontier. The leaders of the Federal Republic are calling for annexations of Polish and Czech territories even before they receive the promised American arms. The Western Powers cannot back these revanchist forces and sincerely negotiate a four power settlement.

The Berlin Conference will come up against these questions in the early stages. The urgent task is to mobilise the demand of the peoples for peace so that the statesmen in Berlin will be forced to seek a genuine settlement. Germany is the focal point of war and peace, and humanity is at the cross roads.

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WAGE MOVEMENT LESSONS

J. R. CAMPBELL

THE wage movement is the most impressive of the post-war period. All sections of workers seem to have grasped the fact that there will be little or no increase in wages if they rely on the goodwill of the employers or of the arbitration boards. The notion, sedulously propagated by the right-wing trade union bureaucracy, that the workers were doing as well as far as wage increases were concerned under the Tory as under the Labour Government, began to be discredited. True, the Tory Government, confronted on its accession to office in 1951 with a strong movement for wage increases, decided not to risk a head-on collision by coming out against all wage increases. It had seen its hopes of a sweeping electoral victory dashed and it had to consolidate its position before it could encourage employers and arbitration tribunals to apply the strictest restraint to all wage movements. With the aid of the trade union bureaucracy it had by the middle of 1952 consolidated its position and slowly but surely the wage increases granted to the workers began to decline. In the last half of 1951 (which included the first two months of the Tory Government) the index of weekly wage rates rose by 6 points, in the first half of 1952 by 3 points, in the second half by 4 points, in the first half of 1953 it rose by only 1 point and in the second half by only 2 points. The downward trend of wage increases is clear to all.

At the same time, the Tories brazenly announced that they proposed to push up the cost of living. The abolition in 1954 of subsidies on butter, cheese, margarine, cooking fats and meat was announced as was the possibility of an increase of rent for the six million workers living in controlled houses. The workers were at the same time conscious that their output was steadily increasing, after the set-back during the 'recession' of 1952. From the position that no wage increase was justified unless it was preceded by increased output, the employers and the Government gradually moved to the position that no increases in wages were justifiable at all. The Engineering and National Employers' Federation was, as is traditional, the arrogant spokesman of the reactionary employers. It could not deny that there were sufficient profits to pay the increase demanded. It asserted that profits were falling somewhat, which was true enough of profits based on the 1952 production, but which

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was very unlikely to be true of profits based on the increased production of 1953.

It became clear to the militant workers in engineering that if a wage increase was to be won there would require to be a great campaign of meetings and demonstrations enlightening the workers and preparing them for exerting the greatest pressure on the employers. It was necessary to dispel the illusion that this wage demand would be followed by an offer on the part of the employers as most others had been. There can be no doubt that this campaign exceeded all expectations. Token strikes and demonstrations occurred in the most unlikely places. The response would have been even greater had some of the trade union organisations not approached the campaign in a pessimistic spirit. The theory that because workers in some favoured districts or factories were earning above the average they would not be interested in the 15 per cent. campaign, was an obstacle in those places to developing a successful campaign. In any case this theory had no basis in fact, as the response to the subsequent one-day strike showed.

Would the new generation of trade unionists, who had grown up in the comparatively easy conditions of the post-war period, prove to be as good as their predecessors? Would well-paid workers, whose earnings are based on good bonus rates, be greatly concerned with fighting for the 15 per cent. increase on the basic rate, would the women respond, would the luke-warm attitude of the general unions affect the stoppage? The capitalist class speculated on all these questions, but could not deny the tremendous effect of the strike—the largest strike—apart from the General Strike, in British history.

Nevertheless, there were weaknesses. A few factories which ought to have come out did not do so. In some the stoppage was only partial. Hundreds of thousands of non-unionists came out along with the others. These were not non-unionists in outlook. They were non-unionists produced by the somewhat higgledy-piggledy methods of trade union organisation at the present time. The skilled unions ought in most cases to make it easier for a man to pay his dues and keep in benefit. It is too easy in many factories for a worker by carelessness and not by evil intent to drop out of the union. Good union organisation would make this the most difficult thing in the world to do.

The electricians' guerilla strikes in the autumn opened the wages campaign. The engineers' one-day strike carried it forward to a

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higher stage. Without these struggles the railwaymen would not have made their threat of a national strike, and secured the modification of a tribunal award. The idea had grown up over a number of years that it was impossible to secure the modification of an unfavourable tribunal award. The Transport Commission indulged in some comic contortions in order to suggest that it was not in any way modifying the award of the Railway Staffs National Tribunal, but no one really took this seriously. The railwaymen had shown that niggardly awards need not be tolerated. Unfortunately the movement was marred by disunity. The other two railway unions—the Transport Salaried Staffs Association and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen—did not join with the National Union of Railwaymen in declaring and maintaining their willingness to strike. This had the effect of reducing the pressure at the very moment when it was essential to increase it.

As compared with railwaymen, engineers and electricians, the miners' wage application has evoked little public interest. The reason is apparent. Outside Scotland and to a lesser extent South Wales there has been no campaign, let alone demonstrative action, which has attracted public attention to the industry. Inside the industry itself only a section, though a very large one, is affected. This is a mistake which both engineers and railwaymen tried to avoid. Wage movements which do not embrace all the workers in a given industry are less effective than those which do. The public, which reads about the high earnings of piece-workers particularly in the Midlands coalfields, does not understand the plight of the lower paid men and the union has done little to inform it.

Both railwaymen and miners were confronted with the argument, that after the interest charges to meet the claims of the old private shareholders were met, there was not enough profit to justify an increase in wages. This was in marked contrast to the engineering industry where excellent profits were being made. Some of this is no doubt due to the historical inefficiency of these industries as compared with engineering, but much more is due to price policy. The prices for engineering goods are fixed by the market. Firms are allowed to charge as much as they can. Coal prices and rail freights are on the contrary fixed below what a market price would be. This, in effect, means that a nationalised industry of the State capitalist type, such as exists in mining and railways, is used to provide for the capitalists in other industries a cheaper service than

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they would be likely to get from a privately-owned enterprise. Freight charges are too low, and certain big industries, like steel, get coal at a cheap rate. Communists have repeatedly exposed this type of nationalisation and it is significant that some right-wing miners' leaders have at last awakened to it.

In spite of the obvious advance of the movement, there are still many hangovers. On the day after the engineers called off their ban on overtime, the *Daily Herald* said this was a 'sign not of weakness but responsibility' and hoped that the Court of Enquiry would recommend 'a fair basis on which sincere negotiations could begin'. The *Daily Mirror,* faced with the renewed guerilla strike movement of the electricians, chided them and quoted the statement of a previous Court of Enquiry to the effect that the only inference which could be drawn from a refusal to go to a Court of Enquiry was that 'one of the parties did not want a settlement . . . except on their own terms'. Well, what is wrong with that? Behind the argument of the Court of Enquiry, taken over by the *Daily Mirror,* is the idea that the workers' demands are always unreasonable and must always be whittled down. There is the further assumption that the key man in a Court of Enquiry, or arbitration tribunal, who is generally one of H.M. Judges, is necessarily impartial. That such a person is influenced by the general outlook of his class and by the policy of the Government, is calmly ignored. The declining trend of wage increases is the proof that absence of militancy plus arbitration spells wage stagnation. The pathetic faith in arbitration and in reason as a basis for fixing wage levels must be abandoned. Wages are fixed by working-class power, which does not mean merely a large trade union membership, but a determination to bring that membership into action.

It is particularly necessary to strengthen the unions in the workshop, to improve the connections between the shop stewards and men and women they represent, to elect the most militant workers to the shop stewards leadership and to fight for the elimination of those reformist ideas, which weaken the workers' will to fight. This would help to develop a greater sense of solidarity with whatever group of workers is engaged in actual struggle. The conception that the workers, in their own interests, must help such a struggle must become axiomatic. Those who are involved in the struggle must not hesitate to ask and those who are asked must rush to give.

The General Council of the Trades Union Congress must be forced by the unions to organise the widest support for all workers

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in action. Its job is not to intervene to secure a settlement on any old basis. Its job is to ensure that the greatest possible weight is brought to bear upon any employers involved in struggle against their workers. The capitalist class is freely predicting that 1954 will be a year of 'recession'. Whatever may be its extent it will clearly mean increased capitalist pressure on the workers. The strengthening of organisation and the clarification of ideas and policy is the most urgent task for the trade union movement.

KASHMIR

EDWARD BURTON

THE dramatic events in Kashmir last August, when Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed and placed under arrest, focussed world-wide attention on the rôle of American imperialism in this highly strategic area. A glance at the map suffices to show the key importance of Kashmir to U.S. war plans. In the north, in the Gilgit area, only a narrow strip of Afghan territory separates it from the U.S.S.R.; to the east lies the Ladakh territory, whose frontier marches for over 300 miles with that of People's China; and in the centre the Kashmir Valley forms the communications hub of the whole area, and is moreover eminently suitable for use as an air base. This position has long been the source of many misfortunes for the people of Kashmir, who live in conditions of appalling poverty. Developments since 1947 which had brought American imperialism within reach of full control over the state, are here briefly recalled.

After the 1947 settlement, British imperialism instigated an invasion of Kashmir from Pakistan, calculating that to bring the state under Pakistan's rule was the most convenient way to ensure the continuance of *de facto* British control. This plan was only partially successful. While the western half of the country, including Gilgit, was occupied, the people of Kashmir Valley rose against the invaders and, with the help of Indian troops hastily flown in, halted their advance. In January, 1948, Mountbatten, then Governor-General of India, persuaded the Indian Government to lodge a complaint with the United Nations against Pakistan for assisting the invaders. Once the issue had come up before the United Nations the American-dominated majority quickly saw to it that, under cover of U.N. activities, a means to interfere in the

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affairs of Kashmir was established. From that time onwards American interference grew ever more organised and effective. In particular, the decision of India and Pakistan in January, 1949, to formalise the long-standing military stalemate by a cease-fire agreement afforded the opportunity to import into Kashmir a substantial number of military observers (mainly American), enjoying diplomatic privileges, with powers to operate on both sides of the cease-fire line, and with the ostensible function of seeing that the cease-fire agreement was observed.

This by no means completes the picture of American activities. From 1947 onwards Kashmir has been visited by numbers of U.S. diplomats and intelligence agents in a variety of now familiar disguises; film-men, press and radio commentators, anthropologists, educationists, etc. This insidious penetration however, did not gain complete control for the American imperialists. They had to contend with the opposition of the Government of India and of the Government of Kashmir, with the much more resolute opposition of the Indian people and finally with the determination of the Kashmiri people themselves to be masters of their own destiny. The democratic movement of the Kashmiri people has won important gains since 1947. It was their resistance to the invader from Pakistan which carried to power the leaders of their mass organisation, the National Conference. Since then they have won the enactment of legislation providing for the abolition of landlordism without compensation, and the abolition of the hated royal dynasty imposed upon them by the British a century ago. In order to provide the constitutional basis for Indian military help they supported the accession of Kashmir to India in 1947, but secured the right to finalise the terms of accession at a later stage. This was done by the Delhi Agreement of 1952, which resolved most of the key problems in this sphere in favour of Kashmir, in that India agreed to accept a limited accession only. (Full accession would have invalidated the land reform, since the Indian Constitution rules out confiscation without compensation, and would also have prevented the abolition of the ruling dynasty.) In all these advances Kashmir enjoyed the support of democratic opinion in India.

But the same period has seen growing differences between the Kashmiri people and the dominant leadership of the National Conference under Sheikh Abdullah. The invasion of the state, the acute conflict between India and Pakistan, the tightening grip of the U.S.A. and above all the protracted atmosphere of uncertainty for

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the future which all these involved, dislocated the whole economy of the state and aggravated the already extreme poverty of its people. The government leaders made matters worse by their mismanagement, by their widespread corruption, and by severe repression of the rising movement of the people. The implementation of the land reform, which if properly carried out would have brought real benefit to the peasantry, was in fact entrusted to bureaucratic and corrupt officials, with the result that the majority of the people felt little or no relief. The burden of taxation grew constantly, and so did the repression of the democratic movement; and with the development of reactionary policies at home went an increasing readiness to come to terms with U.S. imperialism. This fact has not been widely known outside Kashmir, and Sheikh Abdullah has always been at pains to conceal it. But as far back as 1949 references to Anglo-American imperialism were strongly discouraged in National Conference circles. The publication of the paper *Noor*, edited by an old National Conference worker with a long record of activity, was prevented, and the editor himself was jailed. In 1950 Abdullah openly condemned the peace movement in the columns of the official organ of the National Conference. Purges were carried out, and arbitrary bans were imposed on the election of militant elements to official positions in the Conference, and the constitution of the Conference was amended to ensure that the increasingly unpopular leadership be enabled to retain its hold. Abdullah ostentatiously welcomed as 'persecuted Muslims' the Kuomintang elements who had fled from Sinkiang and allowed the Kashmir Red Cross to be used as the channel through which aid was supplied to them from American sources. In 1950 when the people of Leh (in Ladakh) demonstrated against the oppressive policy of his government he allowed his subordinates to raise the cry of 'Communist infiltration from China'. Thus the August events did not represent the abrupt change of course on Abdullah's part which they appeared to outside opinion to be.

On the American side too the plan which Abdullah ultimately espoused had long ago been prepared. Sir Owen Dixon, the U.N.O. 'mediator' appointed in 1950, had formally proposed partition. Even earlier, an ex-editor of the British-owned Calcutta *Statesman* had envisaged partition on communal lines with a special status for Kashmir Valley. In May of this year Adlai Stevenson visited Kashmir and spent seven hours in conversation with Abdullah. On July 5 the *New York Times* published a map illustrating precisely this plan. Already before the end of July it was being widely

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reported that Abdullah, in opposition to his colleagues in the government, now favoured it; the special status of the Valley was to consist in its becoming an independent state, guaranteed by India, Pakistan and U.S.A. That such 'independence' would have meant subjection to the U.S.A. is clear.

Such was the plan forestalled by Abdullah's dismissal and arrest. The new government, headed by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, lost no time in making clear to the world the real rôle of the U.N.O. 'observers'. It bluntly warned them against continued interference in Kashmir's internal affairs and actually ordered the police to arrest any of them found in places where they had no business to be. At the same time it announced a comprehensive programme of measures to bring immediate relief to the people, to root out bureaucracy and corruption, to extend democratic rights, expand educational facilities, and satisfy the just national demands of the people of Ladakh and Jammu. The actions of the new government were welcomed by progressive people everywhere. Its hand was strengthened by the attitude of India, and within the state itself an exceptionally representative four-day convention of 4,000 National Conference workers in mid-September approved its policies by a substantial majority. A month later Kashmir's Constituent Assembly, by a vote of 65 to 10, overwhelmingly ratified the new measures.

A further positive development was the result of the August talks of the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan in Delhi. The agreement there reached went far towards realising the principle long-advocated by the peace movements in India and Pakistan, namely that disputes should be settled by direct negotiation, without the intervention of outside powers.

The danger is still not past. The U.N.O. 'observers' are still active in Kashmir. Reactionary groups in India, Pakistan and Kashmir are striving to reverse the line of the Nehru-Ali agreement and to cancel the gains of the Kashmiri people. Above all the recent U.S. moves to convert Pakistan into an American military base are fraught with the utmost danger to Kashmir, and indeed to India and the whole of Southern Asia. In Kashmir itself only the activity of the democratic movement can guarantee the implementation of the Bakshi government's programme. Nevertheless an important blow has been struck at U.S. war plans. In consolidating and carrying forward their success the democratic movements of Kashmir, India and Pakistan will enjoy the support of peace-loving people throughout the world.

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I. G. FARBEN ÜBER ALLES?

D. N. PRITT, Q.C.

THIS is an account, published in England in 1953—after unsuccessful attempts to secure publication in America—of the trial held before an American War Crimes Court at Nuremberg in 1947-48 of 23 of the leading personalities of the mighty German and international combine, I. G. Farben, on charges of (1) preparing and waging aggressive war; (2) plundering the industries and economies of other countries, and (3) enslaving, ill-treating and murdering human beings.*

When it was announced early in 1947 that they were to be tried, there was some surprise and incredulity in Britain that America, the citadel of private enterprise, would seriously seek to convict and imprison the 'opposite numbers' of her own industrial tycoons; and in fact the trial met with considerable resistance from wide circles of U.S.A. big industry and government. This resistance was rationalised with the explanation that such a trial would make armament manufacturers in America reluctant to accept orders for fear of subsequent prosecution, and that 'if we lost the next war, our own people might be put in the dock'. In reality, no doubt, the trial was felt to be both an assault on the sacred 'freedom' of private enterprise and a violation of the unwritten law that the dock and the prison are intended for the lower orders, and not for 'people like us'.

The trial was nevertheless carried through by a number of determined people, including the writer of the book, who was the chief prosecutor at the trial. The judges, or rather a majority of the three judges, stood loyally if unconsciously by their class, treated the defendants with the greatest consideration (even letting one of them out of prison behind the back of the prosecution in the middle of the hearing), acquitted them all of the first and most important charge, acquitted ten of them of all three charges, found the remaining thirteen guilty on one or other (or in one case of both of the other two charges), and imposed sentences which in all but seven cases were light enough to involve their immediate release.†

It may be noted that even the six who had to begin serving their sentences were all released before the end of 1951, and were free to

*_Generals in Grey Suits_, by Josiah E. Dubois, Jr. (384 pp. The Bodley Head, 16s.)

†These facts are apparently unknown to the draftsman of the cover and 'blurb', who states that all the accused were convicted, and clearly implies that they were all convicted on the main charge!

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return to work in Germany. One of them went into a religious institution, and the remainder proceeded to pick up the threads, indeed the cables, of I. G. Farben. One of the judges, shortly after the end of the trial, stated in writing his 'firm belief' that all the defendants, including five who were responsible for the deaths of some 200,000 slave-workers by brutal ill-treatment, 'can and will make good citizens of the new and better Germany'. Thus guaranteed, they are at this moment important citizens of the new Adenauer Germany, running once again what is in substance I. G. Farben.

Even the knowledge that nine of them had stolen the chemical industries of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and France did not greatly shock the judges; some of us might think that such theft was an offence, if not against free enterprise, at any rate against fair dealing, but the more sophisticated will agree with one of the plunderer-defendants who, under cross-examination as to the particularly cruel pressure he had used to gouge the Czech industry out of its owners, protested that 'if this is plunder and spoliation, then all normal international business deals are plunder and spoliation'. In truth, it was just free enterprise at work under conditions where one party was stronger than the other!

The book, as an account in 370 pages of a trial which produced 150 volumes of transcribed evidence, is a moderately good book; it could scarcely be more than that, for the task of writing such a book well is almost impossible. But the real interest of the book, except for lawyers—lies not in its account of the trial but in a number of other important stories it tells, incidentally and indeed often unconsciously.

One of a number of reasons why the book is interesting, and should be read by a wide public, lies in its revelation of the extent to which I. G. Farben successfully developed synthetic nitrates, rubber, petroleum, textiles, and many other materials without which Germany could not have made war; but this story is already pretty well known, at any rate in its main features. Another lies in the account of the elaboration and determination with which Hitler prepared for aggressive war; this, again, is pretty well-known, but bears repeating in these times, and the book brings one comparatively novel feature in its disclosure of the incompetence with which the Nazi government handled a good many matters—incompetence often corrected, unfortunately, by I. G. Farben. The book is useful too in its reminders of the dangers of rearming Germany, and in particular of letting these very able and ruthless tycoons loose

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to attend to the rearmament. This is well enough known, in all conscience, but can be usefully repeated every day at present. (It is this aspect of the case that causes most anxiety to the author of the book, an intelligent liberal American lawyer, sane on all points with the important and almost fatal exception of the U.S.S.R.)

The particular success with which I. G. Farben tied up various important American concerns so as to hamper the U.S.A. in procuring various essential war materials naturally comes out clearly, especially in a book written by an American primarily for Americans; this too is well-known in Britain, but can bear repetition. The book discloses, also, much of the utter beastliness of Fascism—once again, no novelty, but today emphatically useful to repeat.

Two more important features, not novel but very useful for the general reading public, are, firstly, the deadly dangerous work that is still being done in 'getting away with murder', in one field of life —or rather death—after another, on the plea of 'fighting Communism'; and secondly, the misery, fear and despair with which modern capitalist philosophy looks out on a future out of which it knows it can make nothing except war. There is also plenty of purely incidental 'dynamite' for all sorts of people; for example, the disclosure of the reluctance of the British Foreign Office, during the war, to seize the opportunity to rescue Jews from Central Europe, because it would be difficult to know what to do with them when you had rescued them!

All those points of possible interest, each of which can be decried or discounted into relatively minor importance, would of themselves make the book worth reading. But there is one matter—again new to those, the vast majority of us, who have not yet sufficiently studied the phenomena of super-big industry—which makes the book of the utmost importance. The book helps one to see, through a vivid, extreme, long-drawn-out example, much of the powers and dangers of the industrial titans of the last stages of capitalism, and to realise that they are not just rich industrial concerns a bit larger and a bit more evil than the earlier titans, but something totally different.

There are two main respects in which this difference is shown, unconsciously, in the book. The first and more important lies in the exposure of the relations between the titan and the government of the country in which it is mainly based. Most of us realise, more or less clearly, that governments in capitalist countries are largely controlled by big business; but we don't know exactly how it works out in practice; why, for example, Mr. X is in the government and

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Mr. Y in the board-room rather than vice versa; or why Mr. L is sometimes in the one and sometimes in the other; or whether a different technique is needed for Labour Governments. Here, however, we get a quite fascinating picture of how the most ruthless and brutal and executively powerful government of all times, was in many ways actually run not by its own brutes, but by one industrial titan. We see I. G. deciding how much buna rubber and synthetic petrol is to be manufactured in the years before the war, overruling to its own profit as well as to the ultimate advantage of the war-machine—the more modest proposals of the Government. We see it establishing an army liaison office, (Vermittlungsstelle Wehrmacht) staffed by its own people, to operate such decisions and to determine government policy. We see it preparing successively the rapes of the chemical industries of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, long before the government actually invades those countries; and in both Austria and France we see it carrying the rape through, over the opposition of the Government, on terms much harsher than those the latter, for reasons of policy, denied. Espionage in foreign countries becomes in practice its monopoly. And even in purely military matters like the preparation of maps and other data for bombing industrial targets in prospective enemy countries, I. G. Farben takes the initiative. Still more, in the hideous policy of exploiting slave labour for industrial purposes, Farben worked out and applied in practice a definite and fiendish policy before the Reich government had formulated one for itself at all. As the war went on, one gets more and more the impression that Farben is running the government, the country in general, and even the war, as it had clearly been running the preparations for it before. It overrules ministerial decisions, and even directly disobeys orders signed by Hitler himself.

The second respect in which one sees the titan at work is in the more directly industrial fight; the colossal industrial and financial power which the titan gradually gathers to itself and exercises for its own profit and aggrandisement with the complete amorality of big business 'morals', is seen to produce colossal evils. For once, in one field, it seems true that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Plain rapacity is not the whole story, but it is pretty plain; in Germany, and in every occupied country, Farben seeks to own every plant, to monopolise every product; and, like its American cousins, it often makes the government finance the construction of plants which will be its own property. (Even in rapacity it takes a long view, spending enormous sums on the risk of developing such things as buna rubber, which might not succeed; and it makes vast sub-

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scriptions to Hitler—for example, Mks. 200,000 for subversive work in Sudetenland, where it is raping the industries, before Munich and Mks. 500,000 immediately after Munich.)

Worse than mere rapacity was the particular application of it to the exploitation of slave-labour at Auschwitz, where it set out to build a huge buna plant, on which in all it spent some Mks. 250 million. Here—in advance, as already mentioned, of any Government policy—it coldly carried to its logical extreme the exploitation of human labour to what it calculated, or miscalculated, to be the maximum of profit. There was, or seemed to be, an inexhaustible supply of labour, and thus no need to conserve it; and it applied itself to getting as much work out of it for as little expenditure in food and clothing as possible. If this involved endless beating of the slaves, and their deaths in masses, well and good; Farben supplied its own beaters, and if the beaters did not beat enough work out of the slaves, it had the beaters beaten in their turn. It treated skilled workers a little better, for they were too valuable to be killed off in a short time; but the rest were killed off without mercy and almost without calculation, until even the S.S. complained of the excessive beatings; and the complaints grew more serious when it looked as if the killings would outrun the available replacements. And when the killings (200,000 in all), were so numerous that it was necessary to establish and operate gas-chambers and crematoria, Farben took its profit here too, by supplying much of the crematorium and all the zyclon (prussic acid) used to murder the slaves it had worked to the point of uselessness.

That is big business; and big business is capitalism; and capitalism is in its last stage. To hasten the last stage, let those who think there is such a thing as civilised capitalism, and indeed that they live in it, read this book. And don't let them say, either in Britain or in the U.S.A., 'It can't happen here'.

CONTENTS OF JANUARY, 1954

Outlook for 1954, R.P.D.; *The Italian Socialist Party and the Policy of Unity of the Masses*, Pietro Nenni; *A Common Policy for Labour*, Harry Pollitt; *Wages: The Next Step*, J. R. Scott; *The Real Terrorists in Kenya*, Monica Whately; *Bias in Political Economy*, R. L. Meek. BOOK REVIEW: *Ancient History of Western Asia, India and Crete* (Bedrich Hrozny), Robert Browning.

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Book Reviews

A GUIDE TO ACTION IN BRITAIN

Selected Articles and Speeches, Vol. I, by Harry Pollitt. (180 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *6s.*)

AGAIN and yet again in this first volume from 1919 to 1936 Harry Pollitt addresses himself to the situation of the period and raises and answers the question, 'What is to be done?' From the 'Open Letter to British Dockers' to the last line of the book, Harry speaks as a responsible leader in the fight for Peace and Socialism. The keynote is 'Unity of the working class', not in large letters but in determined struggle at all levels, on the workshop floor, in the streets, in electoral battles, in trade union branches, in Council chambers, and in Parliament and on the international field. These articles and speeches will be a welcome guide to the working-class fighters who are at present leading the fight of British trade unionists to maintain and improve their standard of life. No one man has done more to counter the beggar philosophy and reaction of Social Democracy than Harry. His whole working life breathes inspiration to struggle, as shown in his speeches at the T.U.C. and Labour Party Conferences.

I was a spectator at the 1922 Labour Party Conference, when young Harry, supporting affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party, reminded it of 'the futility of thinking they could shut out a Party which must in future make itself increasingly felt'. That it has done so, despite every ban and barrier, is shown in this abbreviated history of recent years.

Harry Pollitt's *Labour Monthly* article on the 1925 Trades Union Congress at Scarborough where the 'sane and moderate leaders' were forced to give way on many points and the Chairman (Swales, A.E.U.) called for 'a militant and progressive policy consistently and steadily pursued as the only policy that will unite, consolidate and inspire our rank and file', together with his summing up of the Labour Party Conference held at Margate after the betrayal of the General Strike of 1926 hold lessons for us today.

The chapter on the Minority Movement explains the strenuous work of the militants to save the honour and revive the forces of labour in the years of depression and in the bitter aftermath which followed the defeat of the General Strike. The 'Reply to Citrine's' fourteen points will be a valuable education. Citrine was then Secretary of T.U.C. careering his way to Knighthood and to Lordship. His purpose was to 'expose the activities of Communists in the trade unions'. Harry answers him point by point. He also put a number of questions to Citrine which still await reply. Harry continues to fight for militant trade unionism while this 'birkie ca'd a Lord just struts and stares an a' that'. Three years of Mondism, *i.e.* collaboration of boss and T.U. leaders is examined in detail with listed facts and figures to show that the effects of collaboration and rationalisation not only devitalised the fight but seriously lowered the standards of the organised workers.

In the pamphlet 'Into action' the events leading up to and following the greatest of the Hunger Marches of the unemployed are described. Harry and Tom Mann were arrested just before the Congress of the Hunger strikers and so prevented

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from speaking publicly, but the speech here printed is Harry's which was read on his behalf and in which he put forth a programme of action for the whole Labour movement. Read it as an example of careful preparation for an important occasion.

There is a moving appeal to 'Rescue our Comrade Rakosi' who had just finished eight and a half years' imprisonment, and was again faced with a trial in which his and our enemies hoped for a death sentence. The international demonstrations on his behalf saved his life and as the world now knows he survived another eight years in jail and became the mighty leader of a free and liberated Hungary. 'Dynamite in the Dock' is the fascinating verbatim report of Harry's evidence before the Royal Commission on Disarmament where the chairman vainly attempted to curb Harry's damaging exposure of the gang who profiteer on the instruments of mass slaughter.

Harry's speech at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International holds many lessons for today, especially that of how to build a united front where we should take 'as our starting point that the united front is the class front of the workers, drawing all into the common action to defend their wages, their unemployed benefits, their rights and liberties, their fights against rapacious landlords, their trade unions and co-operatives, that is to protect their homes and families from the horrors of fascism and war'.

This volume only gleans a fraction of the vast outpouring of those years up to 1936. But what is here printed is of inestimable value and will whet the appetite of the reader for further volumes.

In all these articles and speeches Harry speaks sternly of the preparations for war. Alas in the past these warnings were unheeded. At this moment while there is the greatest movement for Peace which this world has seen, the imperialists are still greedy for profits, however blood spattered. These articles and speeches will be a great help in our ceaseless struggle to defeat capitalism and achieve socialism, the only guarantee of lasting peace.

R. STEWART

THE ERA OF NATIONAL EMANCIPATION

Works, by J. V. Stalin: Vol. II, 1907-1913. (440 pp. Lawrence and Wishart. *5s.*)

'If the dialectical approach to a question is required anywhere it is required here, in the national question.' (page 325.)

THE stress which Stalin lays on the importance of the national question emerges from the profound analysis that the Revolutionary struggle in Russia, the question of nationhood and the nationalities, and of international working-class unity are vitally interdependent. The section of his work on 'Marxism and the national question' was the fruit of Stalin's analysis of the question. In 1912 - 1913 Stalin's solution of the national question as an integral part of the working-class struggle was a timely and an invincible weapon in the hands of the Russian workers. It is a weapon which has increased in importance in our time. At a time when human lives, resources, social values, territorial demarcations were being demolished by imperialism, and artificial values and barriers erected, it was perhaps easier to agree on the need to struggle for national

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emancipation than to agree on what a nation was, and what comprised the prerequisites and strategy of successful struggle for national emancipation from oppression.

Stalin's analysis of a nation brought a new and revolutionary understanding of the national problem not only to Russia, but to the science of class-struggle as a whole. Every member of the Labour movement has even greater need to grasp and apply this scientific concept of a nation; for today, when the struggle for national independence in capitalist countries and the national liberation movements in colonial countries* have reached an advanced stage, both the emergent and the latent problems concerning the national and colonial question must inevitably increase in importance.

Stalin's analysis of the national question was clear as it was thorough. Could the national question be solved in a vacuum? If not, what are the substantial guarantees that a national question, once correctly solved *in principle*, might not degenerate into bourgeois nationalism, into Bundist or 'Pan-Islamic' nationalism—all of them are essentially contributing to the notorious formula of 'divide and rule'? First and foremost, says Stalin, *'The right to self-determination is an essential element in the solution of the national question'*. (Stalin's italics.) In what does this right consist? 'The right to self-determination means that a nation may arrange its life in the way it wishes. It has the right to arrange its life on the basis of autonomy. It has the right to enter in federal relations with other nations. It has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign, and all nations have equal rights'. Contrast this with the distortion of self-determination into 'cultural national autonomy' advocated by the 'Liquidators' Conference', or with the basically pro-imperialist version propounded by Bauer and Springer and (later) by Kautsky, in which the right to complete secession had been mysteriously withdrawn from the general context of self-determination!

Do we not recognise in our time similar distortions by those Labour or imperialist advocates, whose 'self-determination' and 'self-government' under governor's veto and reserved powers, imperial warships, concentration camps, the deportation orders, seditious ordinances, and a whole range of political mechanism of oppression make the mediæval juntas look like fumbling amateurs? Malaya, Kenya, Guiana — these names bear witness to the damnable handiwork of both Tory and Labour exponents of the imperialist version of 'self-determination'.

There is as great a need to accept with reasoned understanding the central truth that: 'the abolition of national oppression in Europe is inconceivable without the emancipation of the colonial peoples of Asia and Africa from oppression and that the former is organically bound up with the latter'. (Stalin: 'Marxism and the National and Colonial Question'). It is not a matter of mere sentiment or goodwill, sorrow or contrition over the crimes committed against the colonial peoples that can remove the scourge of oppression from our midst. It is the supreme realisation in daily practice that *in fact* and in the strategy based on living facts, the struggle of the British working class and that of the colonial peoples are one and the same struggle, against the *common*

*Dealt with in Stalin's later work—see 'Marxism and the National and Colonial Question'.

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oppressor, for the same goal — emancipation of the working people from the scourge of capitalism and imperialism, for national independence, democracy and the forward march towards Socialism.

Why is it that the imperialists fear this solidarity most, and make it out to be something monstrous? They fear the 'break-up' of their 'Empire'. Inasmuch as the 'Empire' is founded on 'Colonial plunder and annexations, national oppression and inequality, and finally, between the "civilised" nations for mastery over the "uncivilised" peoples,' it is a crime to defend its existence. If there be any that doubt this, let him point to a single corner of the whole 'Empire' today where wars, wholesale oppression, mass poverty, disease, and fiery hatred for the very name 'British Empire' does not exist. Let him point to a single corner of the 'Empire'—from Ireland to Asia and Africa where some flower of British working people's sons have not fought and died, and still fight and die! And for what? Look into the pages of the Stock Exchange year book. Contrast the multi-million profit of the monopoly-capitalist in tin, rubber, oils and a thousand other items of Empire plunder, with the miserable standard of living of the British people, their continuous anxiety over one war after another, and the dread of heavier sacrifices all the time! It is time to cast aside the system that has proved the bane of both the British and the colonial peoples, and to unite determinedly to achieve the great alternative policy: the common struggle of the colonial peoples and of the British working people for freedom for national independence as a daily, integrated struggle; for the removal of the system of national oppression and inequalities, for the establishment of a system based on mutual brotherhood, absolute equality, and the common endeavour to achieve democracy and socialism.

H. B. LIM

CRIME AGAINST YOUTH

The Game of Death, by Albert E. Kahn. (256 pp. Cameron & Kahn, New York; Collet's, London. *8s. 6d.*)

IF the full significance of the facts revealed in this impressive book could be brought home to parents and teachers in the United States of America and in Great Britain, the forces opposing the Cold War would recruit powerful allies. Mr. Kahn gives a fully documented account of the impact of the cold war on every phase of the life of American children. We in England can learn much from what he has to tell. He gives an illustrated and detailed description of atomic bomb drills in American schools: his description of actual incidents show that a veritable climate of horror is created with the children reduced to a state of acute anxiety and fear.

The author describes the scandalous conditions of the schools in the richest city in the world as a result of the heavy expenditure on arms. The evidence he gives is overwhelming. He quotes the *New York Times,* reporting in 1952, summarising information collected in 48 states. 'Today, many thousands of children are attending classes in school basements, apartment house basements, empty stores, garages, churches, inadequate private homes and even trailers. What is more, one out of every five of the regular schools is either unsafe or obsolete. The defence programme has played havoc with building plans . . . almost unbelievable conditions exist in many communities'.

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The evidence of the attack on the minds of teachers, parents and children resulting from the cold war is poignant and very alarming. Mr. Kahn reports not only the dismissal of teachers for refusing to answer questions concerning their political beliefs but also the removal of children from the care of their mother because of her personal beliefs and the social and political views she expressed to the children.

The chapters which detail the way in which comics, T.V., films, etc. are used to acclimatise young people to concepts of violence, savagery and sudden death give a picture of depravity and sadism from which the mind reels. That these tales of horror succeed in brutalising children and young people is proved by the record of the courts here quoted extensively. Many people have realised vaguely that children are paying heavily for the cold war: after reading this book the full tragedy of the deadly injury to mind and body stands revealed.

Yet the picture is not wholely dark. The valiant struggles of many who will not be silenced or cowed, break through and illuminate the story with human courage and integrity. The successful protests of the mothers of New York against the compulsory wearing by the children of identification tags as an 'emergency safety measure' in case of atomic attack and the heroic stand against the witch-hunt made by many teachers and professors, show the spirit which is active in many places and of which we in England know far too little. The fact that this important and powerful book is written and published shows what forces are at work. The quality of those forces is shown by the skill and hardihood which have gone to its making and the passion that pervades it. We can learn much from it: we must see that it is widely read.

MARGARET DAVIES

A STALIN PRIZE NOVEL

The Water Tower, by Andre Stil. (240 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *10s. 6d.*)

I OFTEN wonder who reads the torrent of novels that pours off the presses. I sometimes wonder who finds the time to read the fat book supplements in the superior weeklies on the Spring, Autumn or Christmas lists. Occasionally, in a sour mood, I wonder who reads the lists themselves. I have looked through a large number of recent novels, and the overpowering impression is one of emptiness. Cynicism, smart 'sophisticated' dialogue, and experiments with a few odd men who happen to drift through her life, or vice-versa—with the accent on the vice. No doubt *The Water Tower* will be damned in the literary supplements because it puts a positive working-class view of important events. But let us be clear—the capitalist case is being argued in a thousand novels in different ways. A novel is 'propaganda' if it presents characters taking action in ways that rend the present system of values.

Stil writes about workers in a French port who have refused to load arms for the war in Indo-China. Work has been diverted from them to teach them a lesson, and the Americans arrive to build a base in the area. The atmosphere is vividly created in a swift laconic style, and the characters are men and women in the round, human beings who, finding themselves under intolerable pressure search for ways to fight back. The dockers, and their wives and children, come to life, and you

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feel that you have been living among them, in their damp, rotten huts, fighting the good fight with sturdy comrades at your side. There are scenes painful in their emotional intensity, for example when the little girl is sent to Paris because her unemployed docker father is unable to feed her properly.

The leading role of the Communist Party in the campaign against the American Occupation is described matter-of-factly, as something taken for granted. This may be difficult for some readers to grasp, with a very different situation in Britain, and it must be seen against the facts: the French T.U.C. accepts Communist leadership; the French Communist Party is the largest Party in France, judged by voting strength, and is the unchallenged Party of the industrial working class. The Communists themselves are shown as men and women struggling to find the answers to the urgent problems they are forced to grapple with. These Communists are living people with their personal lives and problems, with a vision of the time when France too will be a People's Democracy and the workers will be the masters of their country.

This is a book which will make a powerful impact on any worker reading it. A docker is injured. 'The thick blood flows down his arm. A heavy red stain seeps into the barley. There will be blood somewhere in the beer of comfortable people'. The translation on the whole reads very smoothly, but one thing made me tear my few remaining hairs out. All through the book sentences end with three dots. I am assured that this is quite common in French, but it is an unnecessary irritation to English readers. Two further volumes are promised shortly to complete a three - volume work entitled *The First Clash*. If they maintain the same high standard as the first, the trilogy will occupy a very high place in working-class literature.

DAVE MICHAELSON

U.S.S.R.

Wages, Prices and Social Legislation in the Soviet Union, by Lief Björk. (Dobson. 199 pp. *18s.*)

MR. BJORK'S book contains a considerable quantity of information. The presentation, however, is legalistic, and consequently more dead bones than living flesh are visible; and the reader must take seriously the author's warning that 'a book of this kind cannot pretend to give a concrete picture of the conditions under which wage-earners live and work in the Soviet Union'.

A fundamental weakness of the English edition is that all quotations from Russian have been re-translated from Swedish. The author himself says: 'the translation of the Russian terminology has proved far from easy, and unless the reader constantly bears in mind the fundamental differences between our social life and institutions and those of the Soviet Union, he may easily be led into misunderstandings by the inevitable use of some of our own terms'.

The book was largely written about 1949, and most of its section on prices is out of date. The presentation of detailed 1947 prices with information about subsequent cuts up to 1951 (but not 1952 and 1953) does not give the reader a clear picture of the fact that present Soviet prices are 40%-50% of the 1947 level. The section on wages is no more satisfactory, if only because Soviet basic wage scales now account for less than half the average earnings of a Soviet worker, and because the scales themselves stand in need

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of revision to correspond with the higher technological levels of Soviet industry. On the whole this book will probably prove more a source for anti-Soviet confusion than of enlightenment.

H.C.C.

A WELCOME QUARTERLY

The Marxist Quarterly No. 1, January 1954 (64 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *2s. 6d.*)

A WARM welcome is extended to the first number of the *Marxist Quarterly* the aim of which is 'to cover a wide range of subjects which are of interest to all progressively-minded people' with a materialist, scientific approach. Emile Burns, the editor, in an article on 'The Position of Britain' shows that the supposed 'extreme precariousness' is due in the first place to Britain 'being tied to the American imperialist plans of war against the Socialist states'. In 'Science in the Service of Society' J. D. Bernal, having made clear that each new advance of science is connected with the advance to power of a new social class, speaks of the struggle in the field of science 'between the last stages of its use in the service of profit in the hands of the bourgeois Capitalists and the first stages of its use in the service of society in the hands of the workers.' After dealing with the growth of science mainly for military purposes in the U.S.A. and Britain, Bernal turns to the situation in the U.S.S.R. where 'in the last four years' Soviet science is entering into a new phase 'one of such rapid growth, development and activity, as completely eclipses everything that has gone before.' Alick West writes on 'The Abuse of Poetry and the Abuse of Criticism by T. S. Eliot', John Gollan on 'Communism and Mankind' following his address to the Communist Party's Cultural Conference in London, A. L. Lloyd on 'Folk-song for our time?', R.P.A. on lives of labour leaders and brief reviews.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

COLONIAL 'DEVELOPMENT' FALLACIES

Much is said about the need of industry for 'new markets', of finance for new spheres of investment. But there is no indication of the crucial point—that it is spheres of investment at a *'reasonable' profit* and markets where goods can be sold at a *'reasonable' profit* that are desired. The fallacy of this neglect is seen in his suggestion that extended colonial development can be combined with 'a raising of Asiatic standards of life'. Such a combination can only be achieved within the limited range where a higher standard of life would make Asiatic labour-power more productive of surplus—the *rationale* of liberal social reform. Apart from this, how is imperialism to continue to draw super-profit at the old rate, let alone *increase* that exploitation, if it has to *give* more to colonial workers and peasants in exchange for the products it *gets* from them in return?

From *British Pseudo-Marxism*, by M. H. Dobb, February, 1929.

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tion to the fund to help keep things going. *The pressure that can be exerted on the official Labour Party by papers such as* L.M. *seem to be the only hope that we have that something will be done in conformity with our desires. I am treasurer of my ward; sometimes we despair of our party, but I find that many members hold views more in conformity with those expressed in the excellent Notes of the Month than with the official line; and I believe they are doing their little bit to push the leaders to the left. Anything we can do to help it on is our job.'* I don't think you could find a more convincing statement of the reasons for building the circulation of L.M.

Firstcomers

AMONG THE FIRST to write in reply to the Editorial Board's appeal for increased circulation last month, was a West Country reader with two new readers already lined up. She thinks the cover 'is a great improvement, fresh and attractive. I notice you have a decoration on the inside cover; flowers in L.M.—and why not? I'm looking forward to interesting stories from veteran and new readers about where they saw their first copy and how they first put it into new hands. Above all, I'm awaiting the promised report on the campaign.' Well, we are sorting out your stories and catching up with the demand for specimen copies. Don't miss the Editorial Statement on page 62.

Thanks, friends

I WISH it were possible to tell of all the greetings we had from overseas readers; among them, Danish, Indian, Portuguese, American, French, German, Chinese and Canadian. Perhaps their spirit is best summed up in this from Germany: 'L.M. has been of great value to me: and I am sure that your efforts in 1954 will help to make it a year of new and greater successes for the forces of peace in the whole world.' December donations were:

£46 15s. 1d.

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